



# KEITH RIPP

## 47<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

September 27, 2011  
Representative Keith Ripp  
Assembly Committee on Transportation  
Testimony on Assembly Bill 265

Thank you Chairman Petrowski, and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 265.

Assembly Bill 265 makes several common sense changes to statutes as they relate to bicycles in Wisconsin. Many of these changes will make bicycling safer in Wisconsin and legalize already common practices. I believe you will find these modifications to be simple, logical changes that are consistent with legislation other states have already enacted. Some changes only require the insertion of a few words.

Assembly Bill 265 makes changes to the moped parking statute. Mopeds are larger and typically take two or three bicycle slots in a rack. Finding a place to lock your bike is more difficult in an area with heavy moped use and forces municipalities to purchase more bike racks.

This change gives a municipality the option of moving moped parking from the bike rack and side walk to the street if they so choose. This alternative was included to give municipalities flexibility in deciding local transportation issues for their communities. A vast majority of areas will not be affected but where there are concerns with moped parking there is then an option to move Moped parking to the street.

AB 265 also makes more subtle alterations to the statutes that are already common and widely accepted practices. When riding a bicycle each hand is visible to other road users. Giving a bicyclist the ability to signal with either hand is valid & logical. This is a common sense change that would legalize an already common practice. 30 other states allow signaling with either hand.

This bill would also allow bicycles to substitute a red rear light for a red reflector. A red rear light is more visible than a reflector in all conditions. Under current law, bicyclists must retain a rear reflector even if they are using a rear light.

Current law defines a bicycle as a vehicle which makes it illegal to pass a slow moving bicycle when a solid yellow line is present, even if it is safe to do so. AB 265 allows for the passing of slow moving vehicles when a solid yellow line is present and there is no opposing traffic present. This, again, would legalize an already common practice on Wisconsin's rural roads.

Currently handcycles (bicycles powered with one's arms instead of legs) are not included in the definition of bicycle and therefore are legally not allowed to travel on Wisconsin roads. Assembly Bill 265 would add handcycles to the definition of bicycles. Handcycles have similar characteristics to bicycles and should have the same rights and responsibilities of bicycles.

AB 265 would allow bicycles to have studded tires on Wisconsin's roadways. Studded tires on heavier vehicles can cause increased damage to roadways and are illegal for any vehicle, except for a small group of farm equipment. However, bicycles are so lightweight that a studded bicycle tire would not increase damage to roadways. Being mindful of the safety of bicyclists in Wisconsin's long winter months, studded tires would improve traction on snow and ice and provide valuable stability to bicyclists.

Assembly Bill 265 is supported by the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation and has strong bipartisan support. I want to thank Chairman Petrowski for holding a public hearing and the upcoming speakers for participating in the legislative process.